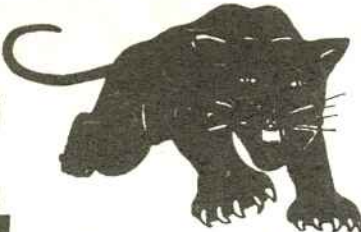


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THE CATECHISM OF THE REVOLUTIONIST



with an introduction by
THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION
BLACK PANTHER PARTY FOR SELF DEFENSE

THE CATECHISM OF THE REVOLUTIONIST



by

Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin

Introduction by

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Black Panther Party for Self Defense

PERSPECTIVES IN BLACK LIBERATION #1

Published by:

BLACK PANTHER PARTY FOR SELF DEFENSE
P.O.Box 8641, Emeryville Branch
Oakland, California

Cover Design;

By Revolutionary Black Artist Emory

INTRODUCTION

The Catechism of the Revolutionist, by Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin, is one of the most important formulations of principles in the entire history of revolution. A contemporary of Marx, Bakunin was the epitome of the activist and his deeds spoke louder than his words. But his words are what history has allowed to endure, Bakunin's message. The history of revolutionary movements all over the world attest to the fact that Bakunin's message must be unearthed and scrutinized by a new generation faced with a new tyranny. In the midst of all this Evil and human suffering, there is too much co-existence going on. Communists co-existing with Capitalists. Slaves co-existing with Slave Masters. Peace seekers co-existing with War Mongers. Black nationalists co-existing with Anti-Afro-American Hordes.

It's time to intensify the Struggle. Within the black colony of Afro-America, this means a declaration of war upon the black bourgeoisie and upon the class of Big Business Men who have turned the National Liberation Struggle into Big Business. These Civil Rights Executives must be allowed one choice and one choice only: total cooperation with the forces of national liberation or facing a terrible consequence. The black bourgeoisie in general have only one choice: return to your people, bringing with you your wealth and skills, and put it at the disposal of your people's cause. You have nothing that is sacred -- not even your life.

Intensifying the Struggle means, at this stage within the white mother country, arising from the sleep of tradition and making some new definitions. Some new distinctions. Within the ranks of the white mother country radicals, the new generation must part company with the old at the very least. Preferably, the new generation should take hold of the old and bend them or break them. There is nothing left for them to prove. They must be demoted to advisory and technical positions. Pressure on them must be stepped up to the maximum and kept there. Stop at nothing.

Compared to the job that Afro-American revolutionaries and white mother country radicals have on their hands, all revolutions and national liberation struggles of the past have been child's play. What must be kept clear is that white mother country radicals are fighting for a revolution -- while Afro-American revolutionaries are fighting for national liberation -- against a common enemy: White Racist Capitalism and its bastard offspring, Colonialism, Imperialism, and Neo-Colonialism.

Read the Catechism. Perhaps you will find a word or phrase that will enhance your revolutionary perspective and intensify your activity. At the very least you have to appreciate Bakunin's spirit. If you get Bakunin's message, then the whole world will have moved a little closer to the future.

--- Minister of Information
Black Panther Party
for Self Defense

THE CATECHISM OF THE REVOLUTIONIST



*The Revolutionist's Attitude
Toward Himself*

1. The revolutionist is a doomed man. He has no personal interests, no affairs, sentiments, attachments, property, not even a name of his own. Everything in him is absorbed by one exclusive interest, one thought, one passion -- the revolution.
2. In the very depth of his being, not merely in word but in deed, he has broken every connection with the social order and with the whole educated world, with all the laws, appearances, and generally accepted conventions and moralities of that world which he considers his ruthless foe. Should he continue to live in it, it will be solely for the purpose of destroying it more surely.
3. The revolutionist despises every sort of doctrinaireism and has renounced the peaceful scientific pursuits, leaving them to future generations. He knows only one science, the science of destruction. For this and only for this purpose he makes a study of mechanics, physics, chemistry, and possibly medicine. For this purpose he studies day and night the living science of human beings, their characters, situations, and all the conditions of the present social system in its various strata. The object is but one -- the quickest possible destruction of that ignoble system.

4. He despises public opinion. He despises and hates the present day code of morals with all its motivations and manifestations. To him, whatever aids the triumph of the revolution is ethical; all that which hinders it is unethical and criminal.

5. The revolutionist is a doomed man. He is merciless toward the State and toward the entire system of privileged educated classes; he need in turn expect no mercy from them. Between him and them there is a continuous and irreconcilable war to the bitter end -- whether it be waged openly or secretly. He must be ready to die at any moment. He must train himself to stand torture.

6. Rigorous towards himself, he must also be severe towards others. All tender, softening sentiments of kinship, friendship, love, gratitude, and even honor itself must be snuffed out in him by the one cold passion of the revolutionary cause. For him there is only one satisfaction, consolation, and delight -- the success of the revolution. Day and night he must have one thought, one aim -- inexorable destruction. Striving coldly and unfalteringly towards this aim, he must be ready to perish himself and to destroy with his own hands everything that hinders its realization.

7. The nature of a real revolutionist precludes every bit of sentimentality, romanticism, of infatuation and exaltation. It precludes even personal hatred and revenge. Revolutionary passion having become a normal phenomenon, it must be combined with cold calculation. At all times and places

the revolutionist must not be that towards which he is impelled by personal impulses, but that which the general interests of the revolution dictate.

The Relations of the Revolutionist Toward His Comrades in the Cause

8. A revolutionist may feel friendship or attachment only for those who have proven themselves by their actions to be revolutionists like himself. The measure of friendship, devotion, and other obligations towards such a comrade is determined solely by the degree of his usefulness to the cause of the all-destructive revolution.

9. Solidarity of the revolutionists goes without saying. The whole strength of the revolutionary cause is based on it. The fellow revolutionists who stand in the same plane of revolutionary understanding and ardor must, as far as possible, discuss all important matters jointly and decide them unanimously. In the execution of a plan thus decided upon, however, every one must, as far as possible, count upon himself. In carrying out acts of destruction each one must act alone and resort to the counsel and aid of comrades only when this is necessary for success.

10. Each comrade must have at hand several revolutionists of the second and third degree, i.e. such as are not entirely initiated. He must consider them a part of the common revolutionary capital placed at his

disposal. He must spend his portion of the capital economically, always striving to extract the greatest possible use from it. He is to consider himself as capital, fated to be spent for the triumph of the revolutionary cause; however, he has no right personally and alone to dispose of that capital, without the consent of the aggregate of the fully initiated.

11. When a comrade comes to grief, in deciding the question whether or not to save him, the revolutionists must take into consideration not his personal feelings, but solely the interests of the revolutionary cause. Therefore, he must weigh on the one hand the useful work contributed by the comrade, and, on the other, the expenditure of revolutionary forces necessary to rescue him, and he is to decide according to which side outweighs the other.

The Revolutionist's Relations with Society

12. The admission into the organization of a new member, who has proved himself not in words but in deeds, can be effected only by unanimous agreement.

13. The revolutionist enters the world of the State and of the educated privileged classes and lives in it only for the purpose of its fullest and quickest destruction. He is not a revolutionist if he is attached to anything in this world, if he can stop before the annihilation of any situation, relation, or person belonging

to this world -- everything and everybody must be equally hateful to him. All the worse for him if he has any relations of kinship, friendship, or love; he is not a revolutionist if they can stop his hand.

14. For the purpose of ruthless destruction, the revolutionist may and frequently must live in society, pretending to be something entirely different from what he is. The revolutionist must penetrate everywhere, into all the higher and middle classes, the merchant's store, the church, the nobleman's home, the bureaucratic world and military circles, into literature, into the Third Department (Secret Police), and even into the Tsar's Winter Palace.

15. The whole ignoble social system must be divided into several categories. In the first category are those who are condemned to die without delay. The association should draw up a list of persons thus condemned in the order of their relative harmfulness to the success of the cause so that the preceding numbers may be removed before the subsequent ones.

16. In making up such lists and for the purpose of establishing the above mentioned order, one should by no means be guided by the personal villainy of the individual, nor even by the hatred which he calls forth in the association or among the people. This villainy and this hatred may even be partly useful by helping to arouse the masses to revolt. It is necessary to be guided by the measure of usefulness which would result, from his death, to the revolu-

tionary cause. Thus, first of all, those men must be destroyed who are particularly harmful to the revolutionary organization and also those whose sudden and violent death may fill the government with the greatest fear and shake its power by depriving it of its clever and energetic men.

17. The second category must consist of persons whose lives would be spared only temporarily so that, by a series of brutal acts, they may bring the people to the point of inevitable revolt.

18. To the third category belong a great many brutes in high positions not distinguished by any particular intellect or energy, but due to their position, enjoy riches, connections, influence, and power. It is necessary to exploit them in every possible way; trap them, confound them, and, getting hold of their dirty secrets as far as possible, turn them into one's slaves. Their power, influence, connections, riches, and strength will thus become the inexhaustible treasury and support of various revolutionary enterprises.

19. The fourth category consists of ambitious officeholders and liberals of various shades. One may conspire with them in accordance with their programs, making them believe that one follows them blindly and at the same time one should take hold of them, get possession of all their secrets, compromise them to the utmost, so that no avenue of escape may be left to them, and use them as instruments for stirring up disturbances in the State.

20. The fifth category -- doctrinaires (refers to Bakunin's opponents within the revolutionary camp), conspirators, revolutionists talking idly in groups and on paper. They must be continually pushed and pulled forward, towards practical neck-breaking statements, the result of which would be the complete destruction of the majority and the real revolutionary training of a few.

21. The sixth and very important category includes women who should be classified under three main divisions: some -- empty-headed, stupid, soulless, who may be used like the third and fourth categories of men; others -- ardent, devoted, capable, but not with us because they have not yet worked themselves up to the real phraseless and genuine revolutionary understanding; they are to be made use of like men in the fifth category; finally, women, entirely ours, i.e. fully initiated and having completely accepted our program. They are our comrades. We must look upon them as our most precious treasure, without the aid of which we cannot get along.

The Attitude of the Association Toward the People

22. The Association has no aim other than the complete liberation and happiness of the masses, i.e. of the people who live by manual labor. But, convinced that this liberation and the achievement of this happiness is possible only through an all-destroying popular revolution, the Association will by all its means and all its

power further the development and extension of those evils and those calamities which must at last exhaust the patience of the people and drive them to a general uprising.

23. By Revolution the Association does not understand a regulated movement after the classical western model -- a movement which always bowing to the property rights and the traditions of the social systems of so-called civilization and morality, has until now limited itself everywhere to the overthrow of one political form in order to replace it by another and striven to create a so-called revolutionary state. Only that revolution will be beneficial to the people which will destroy at the very root every vestige of statehood and will annihilate all of Russia's old traditions, institutions, and classes.

24. The Association therefore does not intend to foist on the people any organization from above. The future organization will no doubt evolve out of the popular movement and out of life itself. But this is the business of future generations. Our business is destruction, terrible, complete, universal, and merciless.

25. Therefore, in getting closer to the people, we must first of all join those elements of the masses, which, since the foundation of the Moscow State powers, have never ceased to protest, not in words alone but in deed as well, against everything which is directly or indirectly connected with the State: against the nobility, the bureaucracy, the clergy, the

guilds (meaning the merchants and capitalists in general) and against the parasitic kulak. Let us join hands with the bold world of bandits -- the only genuine revolutionists in Russia.

26. To consolidate this world into one invincible, all-destroying force is the sole object of our organization; this is our conspiracy, our task.